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## Perris' 25th Annual Christmas Parade

Cheryl Ziska considers herself mom to more than 1,100 kids.

As the staff member who coordinates community events at the California Military Institute in Perris, Cheryl Ziska often finds herself chaperoning students from the campus to various festivals, parades, ground-breakings, ribbon-cuttings and swearing-in ceremonies.

It often involves long hours of work, picking up cadets prior to the start of the event, supervising them while they earn community-service credits and returning them to the CMI campus afterwards. When medical woes once confined her to a wheelchair, Ziska kept up her duties while being pushed by CMI cadets.

"I do what I do because I love it," Ziska says. "It comes from the heart. I enjoy working with the community and with our kids. They are well-rounded, respectful kids and I enjoy working with them."

Ziska will trade places during the City of Perris' 25th annual Christmas Parade on Dec. 14. Instead of working behind-the-scenes, she will take front and center stage as parade grand marshal. The parade begins at 10 a.m. at Fourth and D Streets and ends at Perris City Hall at D and San Jacinto Avenue. More than 100 floats, marching bands, dance groups, equestrian units, classic car enthusiasts, civic groups and school contingents have signed up for this year's parade.

City parade planners say Ziska is a perfect choice for grand marshal. She volunteers at least 1,000 hours a year of her own time for community events and has for several years.

"She's definitely one of our go-to people," said recreation supervisor Spencer Campbell. "We know we can always count on her when we have a community event. She's a great asset to the City. Naming her grand marshal is a richly-deserved honor."

Ziska said she is humbled and honored to serve as grand marshal. She got emotional when she received the news.

"I was ecstatic, I started screaming," she said.

The City has created a special banner inviting everyone who has participated in any Live Well Perris event to march in the upcoming parade. Those include residents who took part in the City's version of the "Biggest Loser" weight-reduction contest, the summer Community Health Fair, walk with the Mayor, hike and bicycle rides with the Mayor Pro-Tem or weekly workouts with City Council members.

Some Live Well Perris participants already are putting on their walking shoes. About 50 who have been taking part in the City's ongoing "Winter Workouts" will be part of the holiday festivities. The workouts take place Saturday mornings in Mercado Park, with the Dec. 14 exercise-session culminating the series. After completing the session, which begins at 8 a.m., the group will make its way to the start of the parade route.

Arturo Cervantes, the City's IT manager who has been coordinating the Winter Workouts, said the response has been overwhelming and gratifying.

"People look forward to the workouts and take them very seriously," Cervantes said. "We have a bunch of hard-core residents who come out no matter what—rain, wind and cold."

One of those participants, Army veteran Louie Viramontes, said taking part in Live Well Perris activities has improved his health. His blood pressure and cholesterol levels have dropped as has his weight. He works out several times a week at the City gym and has taken part in numerous Live Well Perris activities since the program kicked off in June.

"I see the results," Viramontes said. "The City of Perris is awesome. I don't remember any City that does much for its citizens."



Perris resident Cheryl Ziska volunteers more than 1,000 hours each year at community events. Ziska will serve as grand marshal for the City of Perris' annual Christmas Parade on Dec. 14.